

SITUATION REPORT NO. 9
INCIDENT NO. 97-003
DATE: January 20, 1997 TIME: 11:30 a.m.

TO: Governor Edward T. Schafer
State Capitol
Bismarck, ND 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Winter storms and blizzard conditions statewide.
2. DEATH AND INJURIES: The seventh death attributed to the winter storm disaster occurred when a Barnes County man suffered a heart attack while shoveling snow.
3. DAMAGE: Snow removal equipment operators for the N.D. National Guard report routine equipment breakdowns resulting from cold weather, heavy snow, extended operation hours and equipment stress. National Guard maintenance crews are traveling to snow removal mission locations to repair equipment breakdowns, which have included hydraulic leaks and alternator and battery problems.

The National Guard estimated that personnel costs amount to approximately \$125,000 for snow removal efforts between January 13 through 19. Those costs are restricted to payroll, food and lodging. During that time period, National Guard crews logged 825 personnel days. Since operations began, the number of National Guard members participating in snow removal and support missions has quadrupled.

A snow storm on January 18 created visibility problems and caused heavy drifting on roadways in a large area of east central North Dakota, blocking roads that had previously been cleared and shutting down transportation systems in parts of eight counties. Those counties included Nelson, Grand Forks, Traill, Steele, Griggs, Foster, Eddy and northern Barnes.

The N.D. Department of Agriculture continues to receive requests for snow removal and feed assistance.

Steep snow banks at road intersections pose traffic safety risks for motorists.

Motorists have pulled into intersections for better visibility and then collided with other vehicles.

Narrow roadways and high snow piles are making snow removal difficult in many areas. Local jurisdictions are looking for places to relocate snow that has been pushed aside during road clearing efforts.

Many rural residents with medical and health problems have temporarily evacuated their homes and moved into towns. However, short-term housing is limited in some of these areas.

4. RESOURCES COMMITTED:

LOCAL: No change from previous reports.

STATE: No change from previous reports.

FEDERAL: No change from previous reports.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTIONS: Nelson County church parishioners brought food items to Sunday services. Food pantry requests have increased since the storms.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: Two Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) staff members and a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) representative began visiting North Dakota's four Indian Reservations on January 19. The team will conduct on-site evaluation of conditions at each reservation.

FEMA staff conducted an aerial surveillance on January 19 of the south central and south eastern regions of the state. The surveillance was conducted in conjunction with National Guard efforts to deliver parts for snow removal equipment.

FEMA's Mobile Emergency Response System, a support unit for establishing the Disaster Field Office (DFO), will arrive late January 20 or early January 21 with communications and computer systems. The DFO, which will be located at 600 South Second Street, Bismarck, will be staffed by up to 35 members, including representatives of FEMA, BIA, U.S. Department of Agriculture and other federal agencies, as needed. N.D. Division of Emergency Management staff will also be assigned to the DFO. FEMA's temporary headquarters will be at Fraine Barracks until January 23, when the DFO is established. All state response operations will continue in the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Three crews from N.D. Department of Transportation's (N.D. DOT) Dickinson and Williston offices have been assigned to bolster snow removal efforts in other areas of North Dakota. N.D. DOT officials reported that most highways are clear, although some drifting and icy conditions existed early January 19, primarily in the north central portion of the state. Crews were working to clear N.D. Highway 36 and

portions of I-94. Nine military blowers in use by the N.D. DOT have been reassigned to county road clearing operations. District offices are compiling information on contractors and contractors' rates for distribution to local jurisdictions, as well as state and federal agencies.

N.D. National Guard personnel completed four snow removal missions for the N.D. DOT and have 25 other missions underway. Staffing for these 25 missions has expanded to 138 Army Guard, 14 Air Guard and 24 U.S. Air Force personnel. Of those missions, eight are staffed by U.S. Air Force personnel. Equipment in use for all missions includes 34 tractor-trailers, 30 dozers, 23 support vehicles, 19 dump trucks and 11 snow blowers. New missions include: Kulm-LaMoure County, three dump trucks and one civilian front-end loader; Venturia-McIntosh County, one tractor trailer, two support vehicles, five dump trucks and one loader; and Nelson County, two U.S. Air Force snow blowers from the Grand Forks Air Force Base. National Guard personnel are arranging equipment and personnel to fulfill requests for 11 additional missions. Snow removal crews are presently operating in 16 counties, including: Adams, Barnes, Dickey, Emmons, Foster, Grant, Kidder, LaMoure, Logan, McIntosh, Nelson, Ransom, Richland, Sargent, Sioux, and Stutsman.

Thirty-three counties reported access roads have been open to all residents. These counties include: Adams, Billings, Bottineau, Burke, Burleigh, Cavalier, Cass, Dickey, Divide, Dunn, Golden Valley, Grand Forks, Hettinger, Kidder, McIntosh, McLean, Morton, Mountrail, Oliver, Pembina, Pierce, Ramsey, Ransom, Renville, Richland, Sheridan, Slope, Stark, Towner, Traill, Ward, Wells, and Williams. Hettinger County cut paths through fields to achieve access.

Sheridan County law enforcement officials rescued a motorist, who was stranded in his vehicle overnight during the January 15 blizzard. The motorist had adequate winter gear and was not injured.

Ransom County road crews and private citizens assisted two individuals who had been stranded in their homes because of snow-blocked access roads.

The City of Gwinner has issued an Emergency Declaration. To date, 51 counties, 13 cities and three Indian Reservations have issued declarations.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: No change from previous reports.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No change from previous reports.
9. OTHER: The forecast for Monday, January 21, calls for patchy, early morning fog in the eastern part of the state. The statewide forecast calls for partly sunny weather with highs around 30 to 35 above. Mild conditions may begin to taper off Tuesday, January 21, with high temperatures expected to reach the middle 20s and middle 30s but beginning to fall by afternoon. Northeasterly winds are expected to be 5 to 15 miles per hour (mph) and will switch to a northerly direction by afternoon. There is

a 30 percent chance of light freezing rain, which may change to snow in the extreme west and north central. The forecast for Wednesday, January 22, calls for a chance of snow, northerly winds of 15 to 25 mph and lows of 5 to 15 above and highs of 15 to 25 above. Temperatures may become colder Thursday and Friday with lows expected to be 5 below to 5 above and highs of 10 to 20 above.

Minnesota joined North Dakota and South Dakota as a Major Presidential Disaster Declaration area because of winter storm conditions.

The N.D. Division of Emergency Management's Situation Reports are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is: "<http://www.state.nd.us/dem>".

Raymond J. Staiger, Acting State Director